

# NATO School hosts defense planning symposium

## *International gathering evaluates transformation of alliance*

NATO School Public Affairs Office

**N**ATO in Transformation – Changes and Challenges was the theme for the 2004 NATO Defense Planning Symposium hosted by the NATO School in Oberammergau Jan. 15.

More than 180 high-ranking officers and officials from NATO and other invited nations were welcomed to the gathering by Assistant NATO Secretary General for Defense Policy and Planning John Colston.

Among the keynote speakers at the seminar were Professor Ioan Mircea Pascu, the minister of defense of Romania, and Adm. Edmund Giambastiani, supreme allied commander, transformation.

Minister Pascu highlighted the political and military challenges and opportunities involved with integrating new members into NATO.

Giambastiani discussed details of what transformation means for future planning. It is not just about new weapon systems and improving capabilities, he said – it is bringing changes to doctrine, organization, capabilities, training, education and logistics.

### *A mindset for change*

Giambastiani said it is understood that transformation is a mindset. It is an ongoing process that seeks to adapt and master unexpected challenges in a dynamic environment.

Transformation is a strategic opportunity for the alliance,



**Romanian Defense Minister Ioan Mircea, left, and Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation, Adm. Edmund Giambastiani address attendees of a Jan. 15 defense planning symposium at the NATO School in Oberammergau.**

Giambastiani said. The aim is improved interoperability resulting in rapid decision superiority and massed effects across the battle space.

The changes involved will be significant both culturally and intellectually, he said. The result will be an improved NATO equipped with the right capabilities to deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

*Changes to NATO will be significant and will result in a stronger, more powerful alliance.*

### *Military solutions*

Decreasing defense budgets and nationally focused programs often pose challenges to collective agreements made by NATO nations.

The alliance must assess its resources and evaluate how they should be managed to meet the demand and accomplish its mission.

NATO relies upon a strong military capability for its success and ability to support a secure environment. Therefore, negotiations between nations are taking place regarding issues such as air-to-air refueling by a multinational tanker fleet.

Discussions are also underway about the Strategic Sealift, which has been identified as an area where a shortfall exists within the alliance.

Strategic air lift and ground surveillance systems are still being evaluated.

*For more about the NATO School visit [www.natoschool-shape.de](http://www.natoschool-shape.de).*